

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUSTICE MARILYN KELLY TO RECEIVE STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN'S PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARD

LANSING, MI, October 16, 2003 – Justice Marilyn Kelly of the Michigan Supreme Court will receive the State Bar of Michigan's President's Choice Award for her service on the State Bar's Open Justice Commission. The award will be presented to Kelly tonight at the State Bar of Michigan President's Dinner for the benefit of the bar's Access to Justice Fund, which benefits civil legal aid services. The dinner will take place at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit.

Detroit attorney Reginald M. Turner, Jr., the immediate past president of the State Bar, said the President's Choice Award "is a special honor to recognize exceptional service to the public and the bar, such as Justice Kelly's work on the Open Justice Commission."

In a tribute to Kelly, Turner wrote that Kelly is being recognized "for her heartfelt commitment and gifted leadership as Co-Chair of the Open Justice Commission, which implemented nearly forty projects designed to eliminate bias on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability within the courts and the legal profession. It is with admiration and gratitude that Justice Kelly's dedication, vision and contribution to equal justice for all is honored."

Kelly served as co-chair of the State Bar's Open Justice Commission from 1998 to 2003. Under her leadership, the Commission hosted the 15th Annual Meeting of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Legal System, which took place April 9-12 in Detroit. The Commission's mission included raising public and professional awareness of open justice issues and the impact of race, ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability on the fair delivery of justice in Michigan. Kelly is also on the governing board of the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts.

Kelly was elected to an eight-year term on the Michigan Supreme Court in 1996. She had previously served as a judge of the Michigan Court of Appeals from 1989 to 1996. Before becoming a judge, Kelly practiced law in Wayne and Oakland counties for 17 years, during which time she founded the law firm of Marilyn Kelly & Associates. She received her law degree with honors from Wayne State University in 1971.

Kelly's State Bar activities include serving as a member of the Representative Assembly from 1986 to 1988. She also served as a member of the Bar's Communications Committee from 1988 to 1993, and was a member of the Bar's Family Law Council from 1988 to 1994. She was president both of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan and the Women's Bar Association of Oakland County. She chaired the Oakland County Bar Association (OCBA) Family Law Committee and also served as co-chair of the OCBA's Circuit Court Mediation Committee and President's Task Force on Improved Dispute Resolution. She is editor of the 6th Edition of Michigan Family Law published by the Institute for Continuing Legal Education. In 2003, Kelly became a Fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation; lawyers elected to membership in the Fellows are chosen for outstanding professional ability and community service.

Kelly holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University, where she was also an instructor before becoming an attorney. She was president of the Michigan State Board of Education and served on the board from 1965 to 1977, having been elected in 1964 and 1968. She also holds a master's degree from Middlebury College in Vermont and spent a year of graduate study at the LaSorbonne, University of Paris, France.

In addition to other honors, Kelly has received the distinguished alumni award from Eastern Michigan University, which also conferred an honorary Doctor of Law degree upon her. She is a recipient of the distinguished service award from the Michigan Education Association. Recently, Kelly was named one of Michigan's 95 most powerful women by Corp! magazine. In 2003, Kelly received the Eleanor Roosevelt Humanities Award from the State of Israel Bonds Attorney Division.

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